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ABSTRACT

The paper proposes an individualized education program for adult learning disabled students at King Edward Campus (Vancouver, Canada). Listed are short-term and long-term perspectives, as well as short-term considerations regarding such aspects as the diagnostician's role, suggested materials, tuition, and curriculum. (CL)

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A PROPOSED SYSTEM
FOR DEVELOPING INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS
FOR LEARNING DISABLED ADULTS

at

VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE
KING EDWARD CAMPUS (K.E.C.)

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King Edward Campus of Vancouver Community College (Canada), caters to adults of all ages and ethnic and educational backgrounds. Primarily, adults requiring upgrading and preparatory courses leading to training or further education,are accommodated here.

There is general agreement among educators that between 12% - 15% of students in Canadian schools have learning problems. Many of those who have dropped out of school had learning problems and have now come, as adults, to KEC for academic upgrading.

KEC instructors teach groups in regular classrooms and use, for the most part, conventional teaching methods and materials. Many students whose learning problems require a one to one teacher-student relationship, and also those whose medical problems require special attention have not been accepted at KEC because the special facilities and personnel have not been available.

The learning disabled are defined as those students who do not seem to be able to learn by conventional means. It is the educable adults with learning problems that we hope to accommodate at K.E.C. The trainable adults, who expect to learn marginally, will have to wait until more space and money are available to KEC.

Current literature concerning the learning disabled adult considers the prognosis for achievement to be poor past puberty. Conversely, experiences in Adult Basic Education at KEC indicate that some important gains can be made even by those who have gone through our public school system. We conjecture that <u>adult insight</u> and <u>economic motivation</u> are two elements missing in children and that they are powerful aids in learning for adults.

Adult Special Education is so new that there is little or no literature to guide us even though the need for such has been evident for many years. Thus, in embarking on a pilot project in Adult Special Education, KEC stands to contribute valuable information to the field.

Adult Basic Education and Adult Special Education are not the same. Those unfortunates who cannot learn by conventional means, but are educable, have not yet been served by the educational community. KEC, with its record of successful pioneering in Adult Education and in Adult Basic Education, considers it time to pioneer in Adult Special Education.

Special Education, unlike conventional education, relies heavily upon systems of interlocking consultative, information-sharing processes. It begins in referral, continues as long as is needed, and ends by returning students to the regular stream in part or fulltime scheduling.

Mental health, physical health, personal problems, all impinge upon the learning problem. There is no such thing as a discrete learning problem; it is always an amalgam of many. Diagnosis and remediation programs are only two of the aids necessary to helping someone learn. Support services must be available for additional help.

Some are: counsellors
Community Health nurses
the medical profession
College psychiatrist and psychologists
Community Care teams
probation officers
social workers
agencies like Alcoholics Anonymous
labour agencies
finance officers
College administrators

Because Individualized Education Programs for learning disabled adults (I.E.P.A.) are designed to be open-ended, and their aim the moving of students into regular classes as soon as possible, the need for sharing of information (providing the student gives permission), becomes evident. All those who help must know what is going on and inform others as to what they have done.

KEC proposes that a Special Education Program be instituted on campus in order to accomplish the following:

a. to accommodate in special classes, those students who are of average or above intelligence but who have learning problems that make attendance in regular classes impossible.

b. to diagnose learning problems so that worthwhile programs can be developed on an individual assessment basis.

c. to help instructors determine if students, who are not progressing, have learning problems.

The services are proposed to be offered first to people within KEC, and only later to the community, because a pilot project should be undertaken and modified as necessary before community referrals find our accommodations inadequate and unready.

Thus, the following proposal is one for KEC as it is presently constituted.

SHORT TERM PERSPECTIVES

a. Hiring an instructor/diagnostician skilled in Special Education materials, testing, teaching techniques, and theory.

b. Diagnosis of student problems and instruction in the Adult Special Education class beginning with approximately six students.

c. Consultative services for counsellors, and for Adult Basic Education instructors; for faculty and students through counsellors.

LONG TERM PERSPECTIVES

a. Hiring a remedial teacher or teachers to work in the Learning Resource Centre with the mildly handicapped and under the direction of the diagnostician.

b. Adding more classes with instructors acting under the direction of the diagnostician.

c. Extending diagnostic services (through referral to counsellors) to all KEC Divisions.

d. Developing adult-oriented tests, materials, programs.

e. Developing, through the Counselling Department, conference-consultative services on a regular basis.

f. Extending services to the Community

LONG TERM PERSPECTIVES (cont'd)

g. Maintenance of an open-ended approach, with integration into regular classes whenever possible, either for partial or for full programs.

h. Available to students from a cross section of KEC, therefore developing into a special department under Student Services, and funded from the Training and Development Division.

SHORT TERM CONSIDERATION AND NEEDS

1. THE DIAGNOSTICIAN/INSTRUCTOR SHOULD:

   a. have Special Education training (e.g. UBC) or extensive undergraduate courses in Special Education, with related work experience preferred.

   b. have references from Special Education teachers or educators.

   c. understand the sensitivities of disabled adults as they differ from those of children.

   d. have patience and a sense of humour.

   e. be able to adapt children's materials for adult use, and to develop original testing materials and programs.

   f. be willing to work within collegial or team approaches.

   g. be able to develop local statistics and norms.

2. SUGGESTED WORKING AREA:

   a. an office, for the instructor with a desk, chairs, filing cabinets (that lock), bookcase, fan, plants.

   b. a room, for testing, which would need soundproofing, long tables, chairs, cupboards.

   c. one or two classrooms, with desks, carrels, cupboards, chalkboards.

   The classes must be on campus in order to facilitate the open-ended, team approach with Counselling, Health Services, and instructors. Off-campus classes would not be able to participate in any other campus programs.

   Classes for the physically handicapped will need other accommodations because of the need for ramps and special toilet facilities. Thus, the physically handicapped with learning problems will be accommodated in the Long Term plan. Many physically handicapped (including two blind students) learn by conventional means and are already accommodated in regular classes.

3. THE CLASS

For confidentiality, the list of prospective students is maintained by the Counselling Department. There are currently six students on the list, and an additional waiting list.

4. SUGGESTED MATERIALS

a. Educational Tests

Educational diagnostic tests for adults are difficult to find, in terms of their suitability to adult levels. The diagnostic instructor will be best qualified to finalize the choices. Following are some suggestions:

Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale	(WAIS)
Differential Aptitude Tests	(DAT)
Raven's Progressive Matrices	(Raven's)
Wepman Auditory Discrimination	(Wepman)
Wide Range Achievement Tests	(WRAT)
Illinois Test of Psycholinquistic Abilities	(ITPA)

b. Instructional Tools

The Language Master

Programmed Self-Help Materials

High Interest, Low Vocabulary Materials

Peabody Language Kits

5. TUITION, FEES

It is strongly recommended that these programs be offered free to the learning disabled.

Registration fee	$3.20
Materials fee	$10.00 (approximately)

If a tuition fee is mandatory it could be $25.00 per semester.

Sponsorship by agencies would be acceptable. The Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) would probably not sponsor students unless it were demonstrably evident that upgrading via Special Classes would lead to training and employment.

6. HOURS AND TIMES

At the beginning, day classes only; and expansion to night and more day classes as other instructors can be employed.

Beginning Service (One Diagnostician/Instructor)

Instruction time	9 to 12 noon daily
Testing time) Diagnostic service) Consultative service) Program Development)	1 to 4:30 pm. daily

7. CURRICULUM

a. Academic training in the foundations of Adult Basic Education (phonetics, conceptualisation, sound-symbol association, word attack skills).

b. Skills training in pre-academic remedial processes (perception, co-ordination, visual, auditory, motor skills).

c. Social skills functioning as well as possible in the group.

d. Pleasure, concomitant or prescribed (through success experiences), but vital.

More and more people are becoming aware that many adults need educational upgrading. Facilities should be available for them all, including those who have learning disablilities.

In considering the future in Special Education, it seems obvious that the C.E.C. will need to extend its name to include adults and become the "Council for Exceptional People".